

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-25. (Cancelled)

26. (Previously Presented) A method for using a computer system running a computer-aided-design (CAD) tool in generating one or more outputs, thereby activating at least one payment request in accordance with a contract associated with the use of the CAD tool in generating the one or more outputs, the method comprising:

providing a first payment for the CAD tool in accordance with the contract, wherein the first payment is associated with user access to the CAD tool;

using the CAD tool, wherein the computer system running the CAD tool includes criteria for requesting at least one additional payment for the CAD tool, each additional payment being associated with generating an output, the computer system being responsive to one or more trigger conditions corresponding to the criteria; and

receiving a payment request when an output generated by the CAD tool satisfies a trigger condition, wherein the trigger condition adds a watermark to the output for identifying the output as having been produced by the CAD tool.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 26, further comprising sending a payment to a vendor of the CAD tool in response to the payment request and in accordance with the contract.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 26, wherein the trigger condition disables a set of features of the CAD tool until the additional payment is made.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 26 28, wherein the set of features include at least one of generating a predetermined output file and running another the CAD tool.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 26, wherein the watermark comprises at least one of non-functional data, a naming convention, a spacing convention, an ordering convention, and non-functional elements.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 26, wherein the CAD tool comprises an integrated circuit (IC) design tool.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 31, wherein the output has a form of at least one of hardware description language (HDL), register transfer level description (RTL), a macro, a hard macro, a soft macro, a core, a hard core, a soft core, a net-list, a synthesizable net-list, a layout, a process-independent layout, and a process-dependent layout.

33. (Previously Presented) A method for monitoring a use of a computer-aided-design (CAD) tool in generating one or more outputs, thereby facilitating enforcement of a contract associated with the use of the CAD tool in generating the one or more outputs, the method comprising:

receiving a first payment for the CAD tool in accordance with the contract as a vendor of the CAD tool, wherein the first payment is associated with user access to the CAD tool;

entering criteria for requesting at least one additional payment for the CAD tool into a computer system running the CAD tool, each additional payment being associated with the CAD tool generating an output, the computer system being responsive to

one or more trigger conditions corresponding to the criteria; and

generating a payment request when an output generated by the CAD tool satisfies a trigger condition.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 33, further comprising receiving another payment as the vendor of the CAD tool in response to the payment request and in accordance with the contract.

35. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 33, wherein the trigger condition disables a set of features of the CAD tool until the additional payment is made.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 33, wherein the trigger condition adds a watermark to the output for identifying the output as having been generated by the CAD tool.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 36, wherein the watermark comprises at least one of non-functional data, a naming convention, a spacing convention, an ordering convention, and non-functional elements.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 33, wherein the CAD tool comprises an integrated circuit (IC) design tool.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 38, wherein the output has a form of at least one of hardware description language (HDL), register transfer level description (RTL), a macro, a hard macro, a soft macro, a core, a hard core, a soft core, a net-list, a synthesizable net-list, a layout, a process-independent layout, and a process-dependent layout.

40. (Previously Presented) A method for monitoring the use of a computer-aided-design (CAD) tool usable to produce an output data file and enforcing a contract with a CAD tool user for the CAD tool, the method comprising:

receiving the CAD tool by the CAD tool user;

making a first payment by the CAD tool user upon receipt of the CAD tool;

running the CAD tool on a computer system, the CAD tool specifying a trigger condition for requesting a second payment, the first and second payments representing a purchase price related to the CAD tool and specified by the contract, the trigger condition including producing the output data file using the CAD tool;

producing the output data file by the CAD tool user using the CAD tool, wherein the CAD tool automatically adds a watermark to the output data file to identify the output data file as having been produced with the CAD tool, wherein the watermark includes at least one of a naming convention, non-functional data, a spacing convention, and an ordering convention that indicates the trigger condition, wherein the computer system automatically detects the watermark; and

upon detection of the watermark, receiving a request for the second payment by the CAD tool user in accordance with the contract.